

SC452713

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for up to three children. This home is part of a large, national organisation.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2019.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 14 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Staff provide warm and nurturing care to children. Staff understand children's past experiences and trauma, and this enables them to respond to children in a calm and sensitive way. Children make improvements with their self-esteem and behaviours because of the consistent approach of staff. For example, since the last inspection improvements have been made with children's education attendance and all children attend school full time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic staff have supported children to keep in touch with their families where appropriate and are helping children to make plans for Christmas. Staff have been flexible in their approaches to children maintaining contact with their families through outdoor activities and get-togethers on line.

Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and worries. A child told the inspector during this inspection that the staff 'are wonderful, I love it here and they do a very good job.' Staff support children to talk about their health, emotional well-being and the importance of telling the truth. Consequently, children's emotional and mental health is promoted.

The manager has ensured that improvements have been made to the home as a result of the requirement made at the last inspection. A new fitted kitchen, a new upstairs bathroom and a new bathroom in a child's bedroom have been installed. The second upstairs bathroom has also been modernised. These are positive additions to the home, however, improvements are still needed to some areas including the lounge areas, kitchen and third downstairs bathroom to ensure it is comfortable and homely throughout for children. Improvement work was ongoing during this visit by a maintenance worker.

The safety of children

The manager and staff prioritise children's safety. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments include comprehensive information about children's needs together with actions to ensure staff keep children safe.

Since the last inspection there have been five incidents of low-level restraint which were appropriate. The manager has thorough oversight of these incidents and corresponding records that include in depth detail about the child's behaviours including why restraint was necessary.

The manager ensures that swift action is taken in response to safeguarding concerns. For example, one staff member has been dismissed after investigation into his behaviours and responses to a child. The manager ensured statutory processes were followed and that the child's safety was prioritised. However, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service was not made. This was completed during this inspection.

Leaders and managers

The manager has effective oversight and ensures reliable monitoring of incidents within the home. She helps improve experiences for children through her scrutiny and unwavering support to staff. Staff describe her as a very dedicated and approachable manager.

COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed as a result have created significant challenges in relation to staffing arrangements, children needing to isolate from school and a lack of planned outdoor activities. However, the manager has been creative in enabling children to enjoy picnics and cinema evenings in the garden. Children have also celebrated Thanksgiving with a large roast dinner which has kept them entertained.

The manager has effective systems in place to ensure staff complete mandatory training. For example, she has a comprehensive spreadsheet to track and monitor training. As a result, the manager has ensured that all staff are up to date with mandatory training. Since the last inspection staff have now received training in the Prevent duty and Autism Spectrum Condition which has assisted in their understanding of children's needs.

One requirement from the last inspection has been carried over as it is not fully met. The requirement regarding further improvements to the home will be reviewed at the next inspection as work is not yet finished.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who- In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to- ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to- meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.	26 February 2021

(Regulation 6 (1)(2)(c)(i)(ii))

In particular ensure the children's bathrooms, bedrooms and living areas are decorated and maintained to a good standard. The home needs to be a warm and welcoming environment.

Recommendations

- In particular, review the responsibilities set out within Working together to safeguard children and make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service in a timely manner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.2)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC452713

Registered provider: Greenfields Adolescent Development Limited

Registered provider address: Caretech Community Service Ltd, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Mark Lazarus

Registered manager: Melanie Grace

Inspector

Anna Gravelle, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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